

REFLECTIONS: *Live-trapping reptiles in the coastal sagescrub community, Site 300*

by Jim Woollett, wildlife biologist

Environmental studies of the air, water, and wildlife at LLNL involve the efforts of numerous programs and staff across the institution. Through the eyes and camera of LLNL wildlife biologist, Jim Woollett, this photo essay gives a rare look at one particular wildlife research project at Site 300. The following photos were collected during ongoing field activities investigating the effects of prescribed fire treatment on a unique California habitat — the coastal sagescrub — and its inhabitants. Coordinated with the assistance of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the project requires the live trapping (and release) of special reptile species that are of particular interest to land managers in this region. During the research, as seen in these photos, a diversity of wild animals are encountered.



The coastal sagescrub is a habitat found on steep-sided, rocky slopes with shrubs and grasses intermixed.



Trapping reptiles for study requires the right equipment: snake tongs and sheltered traps that provide cover from the extreme summer temperatures.



Even the rabbit slows down when ground temperatures exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit.



Oh boy! Two rattlesnakes in one trap.



A juvenile skink is a small and shifty character to handle.



Tracking a lizard across the sand.



Red racers are normally too quick to photograph.



A longnose snake is known as a sharp-dressed reptile of the scrub.



Born a few weeks earlier, this glossy snake is hungry and looking for food.



These centipedes are best left alone.



You never know who may be watching you.



Deer herds find particularly nutritious forbs around sagescrub patches.